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Remarks of Congresswoman Doris Matsui At California Water Meeting

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05) delivered brief remarks at the Department of Interior regarding Secretary Salazar’s plan of action to improve California’s water challenges. Congresswoman Matsui’s statement, as prepared for delivery, is below:

“I stand in front of you as the Member of Congress from Sacramento and as a farmer’s daughter from the Central Valley. I understand that water is critical to our state’s economy and our way of life. There is no doubt that the opinions aired today will be varied, but after three years of drought, pumping restrictions, and lost jobs from the Valley to the Coast, it is clear that most in our state have an honest desire for a comprehensive solution to the Delta’s problems - a solution that keeps California’s agricultural economy strong and the Delta healthy, but one that does not ignore the needs of Northern California businesses, farmers, and residents.

“The Sacramento Valley is the upper part of California’s Central Valley, and it has a long agricultural tradition. It is also home to over 2 million urban residents, many of whom I represent, many of whom feel that they need to have a seat at the table, to be partners in a solution. In the quest for a solution, we cannot move so fast that problems in one part of the state are redirected to another. And we cannot move so fast that we don’t pause to ask the right scientific questions.

“We must understand that changes to one part of the Delta, will have impacts on another. Without recognizing all of the problems we are facing, there is a risk of trading an environmental concern in the southern Delta for another along the Sacramento River. History has shown that without thoughtful consideration, we will be back here in ten years worse off than we are now, and with a set of problems far more costly.

“Our state is in the third year of drought. Our water issues did not arrive over night and will not be solved overnight. Our rush to find a solution must be made on sound science and a full understanding of the issues at play, not easy talking points.

“In closing, I want thank you again for taking such a high level of interest in California’s water issues. We have come a long way in a year...and have a long way to go. Without a strong federal commitment I do not believe any solutions are sustainable for our state’s economy, water supply and our environment. As the Department continues to tackle this issue, I encourage you to travel the full state and take the position of Northern Californians into account.

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